

# NEBRASKA SUPREME COURT



## *Office of Public Information*

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Legal Self-Help Center Serving Grand Island, Hastings and Kearney Opens December 4, 2009**

(Lincoln, NE) – November 23, 2009 – A new Legal Self-Help Center is opening Fridays beginning December 4 in the Hall County Courthouse.

The office is designed to provide legal information to individuals who are representing themselves in civil matters before the courts.

“While the Self-Help Desk is not a substitute for representation by a lawyer, the reality is that many individuals appear in court unrepresented by legal counsel. Most of these people have few or no resources to hire an attorney. They attempt to navigate the court system on their own without correct information and with an incomplete understanding of the workings of the court system. The Self-Help Center will make available correct and current information on Nebraska law and court proceedings in family law matters such as divorce, child custody, support, and visitation” said Court of Appeals Judge Richard D. Sievers, Chairperson of the Nebraska Supreme Court Pro Se Committee.

The Self-Help Center is located on the lower level of the Hall County Courthouse across from Courtroom #3 at 111 West First Street in Grand Island. Office hours are 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. every Friday with no appointments needed; individuals will be offered assistance on a first-come, first-served basis.

The Tri-City Self-Help Center will maintain a small library of legal resources including manuals, brochures, and forms that will allow litigants to more easily navigate the legal system.

“We are particularly pleased that the legal communities serving this area have joined together to offer this type of assistance. Our volunteer lawyers from Hastings, Kearney, Grand Island and the Nebraska State Bar Association will provide staffing for the center,” said Hall County District Court Judge Teresa Luther. “This has truly been a collaborative effort by the Nebraska Supreme Court, Nebraska State Bar Association, Clerk of the District Court Valorie Bendixen, and the Hall County Board of Supervisors. They deserve our sincere thanks.”

Nebraska Supreme Court Committee on Implementation of Pro Se Litigation, chaired by Sievers established the design for a pilot Self-Help Center in Lincoln. More recently, a Self-Help Center was opened in Omaha through the efforts of the Douglas County District Court. Legal Self-Help Centers have been well established in many other states by courts and bar associations to deal with the challenges presented to the judicial system by the increasing number of self-represented litigants in America's courts.

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Press Contacts:

Honorable Richard D. Sievers, Nebraska Court of Appeals and Chair of the Nebraska Supreme Court Committee on the Implementation of Pro Se Assistance, 402-471-3732.

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Honorable Teresa Luther, Hall County District Court and Vice Chair of the Nebraska Supreme Court Committee on the Implementation of Pro Se Assistance, 308-385-5666.